

policies. Robinson's recommendations are profoundly sensible, but so too is his pessimism about the chances of seeing such a shift.

Liza Schuster *Department of Sociology, City University, London*

doi:10.1093/refuge/fei044

Internal Conflict and the International Community: Wars Without End? By Roderic Alley. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004. 252pp. £47.50. ISBN 07546 0976 6.

The subject of war has been profitably explored through the prism of military history. Scholars such as Michael Howard, Martin Van Crevald and William McNeill have defined the genre. International relations theorists such as Robert Jervis and John Mearsheimer have also fruitfully expanded our understanding of the phenomenon. More recently, research advanced by the political scientists and sociologists such as Mary Kaldor, David Keen and Mark Duffield have highlighted the qualitative transformation of armed conflict and the emergence of so-called 'new wars'. Roderic Alley's *Internal Conflict and the International Community* is a timely effort to bring these diverse streams together into one volume.

Alley's core innovation is his introduction of an evidentiary approach to the study of war. Just as a 'physician diagnoses a problem based on sound evidence and awareness of its root causes ... so too must the conflict analyst' (p. 5). Drawing on a rich and diverse literature, he provides a wide-ranging overview of basic concepts and international priorities in relation to internal conflict, such as small arms, refugees and internally displaced populations, human rights and international humanitarian law, international responses and post-conflict reconstruction. It is the undergraduate student's guide to conflict *par excellence*.

In his discussion of the origins of conflict, he signals the tensions between qualitative and quantitative approaches to testing causal pathways, the importance of triggers and catalysts, and the dangers of relying on formulaic explanations, prescriptive philosophies and technical solutions that suit the bureaucratic priorities of states and international agencies. Throughout, he highlights a collection of hypotheses that link international processes and phenomena with the onset and likely international response to war.

Focusing on a selection of chapters gives a sense of the breadth of their content. The chapter on small arms, for example, begins with a discussion of civil society's relatively successful attempts to push 'officialdom' into taking the issue on at the multilateral level. Though this reading likely over-estimates the role of civil society and arms control advocates in influencing disarmament debates (in contrast to, say, the pivotal role of NGOs in the landmines campaign), Alley argues that arms transfers are generated by a combination of internal conflict, weak peace agreements, poor governance and impunity. He describes arms as 'insecurity multipliers' that exacerbate warfare, rather than trigger it outright. In his review of the Organization of African States, African

Union, EU and UN instruments to contain arms flows, he issues a series of recommendations to push the disarmament process forward, drawing on negotiating determinants and bargaining theory. While Alley focuses on the emergence of norms and advocacy coalitions, he does not consider the veritable explosion of regional and national interventions already advanced by international agencies such as the harmonization of arms control legislation, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration or weapons collection programmes.

Alley's chapter on refugees focuses primarily on displacement and repatriation, both of which have implications for the emergence of conflict. His priority is the increasingly weak and eroding asylum response, and the difficulties associated with providing protection, particularly in so-called 'stateless conflicts' defined loosely as states with weak or illegitimate governments. He also observes the increasing shift in political and budgetary support for refugees to the 'source'—emphasizing in-country protection and rapid durable solutions for internally displaced people. Though Alley calls for a rights-based approach to guide international responses, he nevertheless highlights the importance of mitigating 'root causes' as a more effective approach to reducing displacement. He perhaps optimistically calls on UNHCR to adopt a more flexible approach, and offers a number of controversial solutions such as expanding its mandate while retaining the principle of asylum.

But what is at once the volume's greatest strength appears also to be its most profound liability: its comprehensiveness blinds a clear reading of its core arguments. Alley's over-riding objective appears to be an examination of the international ramifications of, and external responses to, internal conflict. His volume was generated in response to the reticence of international relations scholars to explain adequately these international dimensions of intra-state conflict. As such, the volume aims to marry international relations—particularly its political, military and political economy strands—with the study of civil war.

Oddly, for a book that claims to analyse the international community's relationships with such conflicts, there is neither a clear definition of the 'international community' (the referent) nor what constitutes an 'external' response. Rather, Alley swerves between the UN Security Council, international agencies, coalitions of foreign ministries and donor governments, obstinate states, civil society (broadly defined), or all of the above. Though covering an impressive range of cases and interventions, he never gets down to defining the basic terms of his various hypotheses.

Alley's conclusions are pessimistic. He is sceptical that the international community, defined alternately as states, power holders and overlords of power, is genuinely committed or adequately equipped to prevent, respond to, much less end internal conflict. It almost seems that where Alley expects to uncover a liberal internationalist order with its trappings of human rights and international humanitarian law, he instead gloomily finds the international system wanting. Each of his ten chapters ends with an ominous record of the failures of the international community, signalling the likelihood of still more

civilian deaths and a future of conflicts. For example, the opening chapter concludes that the 'international community' still lacks the

institutional systems and ethical codes that can comprehend, register and articulate responses to internal conflict and its emanations. For too many governments, diagnosis of these causes appeals least when the remedies to emerge signal the necessity for long haul commitments (p. 36).

Even international relations theory seems inadequate to the task of taking on civil war, he concludes, and it has a considerable distance to go before it can offer a comprehensive account of why the external impacts of intra-state conflict matter.

Nevertheless, Alley argues that civil wars have potentially profound implications for international relations scholarship, and the 'international community' more generally. After all, such conflicts threaten sovereignty, enshrined principles of non-interference, the legitimacy and credibility of state capabilities and even states themselves. These wars also test basic assumptions about the use of force, the balance of state and collective interests, and the appropriate use of incentives and deterrence in demanding circumstances. Alley goes on to argue that they have enormous implications—from ripple or contagion effects in neighbouring countries to challenging the basis of international cooperation in contexts of genocide and gross violations of humanitarian law. Internal conflicts are likely to continue, he seems to argue, without end.

Robert Muggah *Graduate Institute of International Studies, University of Geneva, and Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford*

doi:10.1093/refuge/fei045

This Place Will Become Home: Refugee Repatriation to Ethiopia. By Laura C. Hammond. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004. 257pp. \$45/£25.95, ISBN 0 8014 43075 hb; \$19/£11.50, ISBN 0 8014 89393 pb.

While the decade of repatriation declared by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in 1992 is long over, voluntary repatriation is widely regarded as the best 'durable solution' for refugees. The appeal of people returning to their 'homes' and their restoration to a normal way of life is beguiling. While the simplistic nature of this 'solution' has been challenged in the literature, Laura Hammond's book is one of the first detailed anthropological studies that deconstructs the process of repatriation as she follows what happens beyond the UNHCR 'operation' to describe how people re-establish their lives in their country of origin.

This book is based on extensive fieldwork carried out over nine years from 1993 with Ethiopian refugees who repatriated from Sudan to Ada Bai in north-west Tigray, Ethiopia. The author arrived in the area five months after the first people had settled there and describes the parallel processes of 'emplacement'—making an unfamiliar place into 'personalized, socialized